Chapter VII

RECOMMENDED FREEWAY SYSTEM PLAN AND PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets forth the final recommended plan and program for the reconstruction of the freeway system within the seven-county Southeastern Wisconsin Region. Included are sections that: a) draw findings and conclusions with respect to the consensus seeking process identified in the study design for reaching a conclusion to the study; b) set forth a series of ancillary recommendations to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) as the Department approaches the freeway reconstruction program in the coming years; c) set forth a potential schedule for undertaking the freeway reconstruction program; d) set forth a SEWRPC staff recommendation as to the content of a final recommended plan; and e) report on the final actions taken by the Advisory Committee.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS: CONSENSUS SEEKING PROCESS

The regional freeway reconstruction study was guided by a study design document reviewed by the Advisory Committee upon initiation of the study.1 Importantly, that study design outlined a process for identifying a “regional consensus” on the desirable scope of a freeway system reconstruction plan and program. While the process sought broad public and elected official participation in reviewing the study

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findings and in commenting on a preliminary plan, the study design explicitly indicated that the desired regional consensus would be based on the extent to which the seven county boards of supervisors in the Region could come to agreement on a particular set of recommendations that would comprise a freeway reconstruction plan.

The actions of the seven county boards of supervisors on the preliminary recommendations put forth by the Advisory Committee are documented in the preceding chapter of this report. The following findings may be drawn from that documentation:

1. With respect to that portion of the preliminary plan that calls for rebuilding the entire freeway system to modern design standards as reconstruction projects are undertaken over the next three decades, thereby addressing many serious existing design and design-related safety problems, the actions of the seven county boards of supervisors and the four county executives in the Region indicate unanimous support for the plan while recognizing the need for WisDOT to minimize adverse impacts upon those individual landowners, building occupants, and neighborhoods most directly affected by the reconstruction process.

2. With respect to that portion of the preliminary plan that calls for adding lane capacity along 108 miles of the 127 miles of freeway proposed in the preliminary plan for capacity expansion—excepting only 19 miles of freeway that extend along IH 43 from the Mitchell Interchange to Silver Spring Drive and along IH 94 from the Marquette Interchange to the Zoo Interchange, the actions of the seven county boards of supervisors and the four county executives in the Region indicate unanimous support for the plan, again recognizing the need for WisDOT to minimize adverse impacts.

3. With respect to that portion of the preliminary plan that calls for adding lane capacity along the remaining 19 miles of freeway in central Milwaukee County proposed in the preliminary plan for capacity expansion, the actions of the seven county boards of supervisors and the four county executives in the Region indicate widespread—but not unanimous—support for the plan, with all parties concerned except the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors supporting this aspect of the preliminary plan. Again, those supporting this aspect of the plan recognized the need for WisDOT to minimize adverse impacts.
From the foregoing findings, it may be concluded that the desired regional consensus, as that term was defined in the study design document, should include those portions of the preliminary recommended plan that call for rebuilding the entire freeway system to modern design standards and for adding lane capacity along 108 miles of the 127 miles of freeway proposed in the preliminary plan for capacity expansion. It may be further concluded that the legislative and executive branches of Milwaukee County government disagree on that portion of the preliminary plan calling for added lane capacity along 19 miles of freeway in central Milwaukee County.

ANCILLARY RECOMMENDATIONS TO WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

No matter what recommendations the Advisory Committee may choose to include in a final recommended freeway reconstruction plan for southeastern Wisconsin, there are a number of ancillary recommendations to be made to the WisDOT as that Department undertakes freeway reconstruction projects over the next several decades. These ancillary recommendations are set forth in the following sections and deal with the conduct of preliminary engineering and environmental studies, noise barriers, stormwater management, the participation of minority-owned businesses and the minority labor force in the reconstruction program, local government cost-sharing, and freeway system law enforcement patrols in Milwaukee County.

Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Impact Assessment Studies

Every freeway segment will require preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies conducted by the WisDOT. These will again consider freeway reconstruction alternatives, including rebuilding the freeway system as is, reconstructing the freeway system to provide varying degrees of meeting modern design standards, and reconstructing the freeway system with and without additional lanes. During preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies, the WisDOT works with local communities in an effort to obtain their understanding, and support, of the proposed reconstruction of the freeway system. As well, during the preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment of each freeway segment, the WisDOT will solicit input from the county in which the freeway segment is located, the municipality in which the freeway segment is located, the communities and neighborhoods adjacent to the freeway segment, and the general public. Final decisions with respect to freeway reconstruction and whether or not additional lanes will be provided are made only at the conclusion of preliminary engineering. As an integral part of the
preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies, it is recommended that the WisDOT should:

- Fast-track preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies on those freeway segments where potential residential and commercial property acquisitions may be required, as identified during the conduct of this systems level planning effort. These areas face uncertainty as to the number, location, and impact of potential property acquisitions. Definitively identifying the number and location of required properties will end the uncertainty within these communities and neighborhoods. The WisDOT should work to complete preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies for these freeway segments, and in particular, the Zoo, Mitchell, and Airport Interchanges, IH 43 between the Mitchell and Marquette Interchanges, and IH 43 between the Marquette Interchange and Brown Deer Road, as soon as funding is made available, hopefully within the next five years.

- Consider and compare the costs and benefits of a number of freeway segment reconstruction alternatives, including rebuilding the freeway segment as is; a range of alternatives which will provide varying degrees of, and options for, meeting modern design standards, including an evaluation of the costs and impacts of meeting modern design standards, particularly for those locations where right-of-way acquisition impacts are significant; and alternatives with and without additional lanes.

- Consider and compare all direct and indirect costs associated with each alternative considered for the reconstruction of each freeway segment. These direct and indirect costs related to each freeway segment include, but are not limited to, costs associated with construction, operation and maintenance, congestion, delay, reliability, traffic mitigation, safety, right-of-way requirements, storm water management, wetlands, primary environmental corridor, natural areas, air quality, noise, historical sites, and archaeological sites.

- Work with each community adjacent to each freeway segment in an effort to develop a mitigation plan to address all identified and perceived negative impacts of the existing freeway system and of its potential reconstruction, including residential and commercial property acquisition, traffic noise levels, landscaping, aesthetics, and the need for additional or alternative surface street or pedestrian/bicycle crossings of the freeway. This plan, prepared by the WisDOT, should try to
address and minimize these community impacts and concerns through community sensitive design.

- Develop a traffic mitigation plan for each freeway segment to address the diversion of travel to public transit and traffic to alternate routes during the actual reconstruction of each freeway segment. Freeway on- and off-ramp closures and mainline freeway capacity reductions during the actual reconstruction of each freeway segment will result in travel and traffic diversion. The WisDOT should work with the local transit system operators and the local units of government to recommend traffic mitigation strategies, including improvements in transit service and arterial street and highway improvements, traffic engineering, traffic signal timing and coordination, intersection improvements, curb-lane parking restrictions, and other measures. The implementation of the recommended traffic mitigation plan for the reconstruction of each freeway segment should be funded entirely with federal and state funds, with no local cost share.

- Develop, implement, and fund an advance acquisition program whereby properties needed for freeway reconstruction can be authorized for purchase following the completion of preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies. This program under Federal and State law should ensure that the prices paid for properties purchased are based upon fair market replacement value, holding property owners harmless against market loss owing to the reconstruction effort. The program should allow WisDOT to acquire properties well in advance of construction needs following preliminary engineering in those cases where willing sellers make themselves available for that purpose. In addition, the program should be structured so as to require that the firm retained by WisDOT to acquire properties and relocate individuals and businesses is separate from and has no connection with the firm that has been retained by WisDOT to undertake the preliminary engineering and environmental studies and/or to manage/supervise the reconstruction activities.

**Noise Barriers**
The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will identify the need, feasibility, and location of potential noise barriers as an integral part of the preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies for the reconstruction of each freeway segment. Need and feasibility are defined in TRANS 405 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. Need is established based upon existing and projected future noise levels, and noise level standards. Feasibility is defined as a maximum cost of a potential noise barrier not exceeding $30,000 (in 1988 dollars) per abutting residence. During preliminary
engineering, the WisDOT works with local communities in an effort to obtain their understanding, and support, of proposed reconstruction of the freeway system, and the WisDOT as part of that effort, will also work to obtain local community understanding, and support of, needed and feasible noise barriers. Noise barriers identified as needed and feasible during the preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies for the reconstruction of each freeway segment and which are supported through resolution by the affected local unit of government, will be built as an integral part of the reconstruction of each freeway segment—entirely with Federal and State funds, without any local cost share.

It is recommended that noise barriers identified as needed, but not feasible due to their cost per abutting residence, on freeway segments in urban areas recommended in preliminary engineering for reconstruction with additional lanes and/or major redesign, should be constructed also as an integral part of the freeway segment reconstruction, and also entirely with federal and state funds, without any local cost share. This change will require amending Trans 405 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, which the WisDOT should actively pursue.

During freeway system reconstruction, the WisDOT should also work to provide a more uniform, durable, and aesthetically pleasing design of noise barriers in southeastern Wisconsin. As part of this effort, the WisDOT should attempt to soften the appearance of noise barriers through landscaping, particularly on the side of the barrier facing residences.

**Stormwater Management**

During the reconstruction of the freeway system in southeastern Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) should identify and implement stormwater management controls that improve the quality and provide for no increase—and desirably a reduction—in the peak discharge rate of stormwater runoff from the freeway system. The consideration of stormwater management controls and identification of controls to be implemented on each freeway segment should be done as an integral part of the preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies for each freeway segment. The stormwater management controls should accomplish the following:

- Improve the quality of stormwater runoff from each freeway segment. This would be accomplished by implementing the requirements of TRANS 401 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. Under these administrative code requirements, total suspended solids in stormwater runoff would be reduced by a minimum of 40 percent.
• Provide for no increase, and desirably provide for reduction, in the post-freeway reconstruction stormwater peak discharge rates from the existing freeway stormwater peak discharge rates, during rainfall events with recurrence intervals ranging from two through 100 years.

• Prevent any increases in the regional flood flows and stages and in stream bank erosion rates by managing the volume, timing, and peak discharge rate of runoff from freeway facilities during rainfall events with recurrence intervals ranging from two through 100 years.

The first of the three goals addresses the quality of the stormwater runoff from the freeway system and is consistent with the stormwater discharge requirements in TRANS 401 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. The next two goals may go beyond the administrative code requirements and address stormwater runoff rate of discharge, and potential flooding along receiving streams and overloading of existing stormwater and combined sanitary sewer systems. Accomplishing the second and third goals will require WisDOT to work with other agencies in the identification and implementation of stormwater management controls. A cooperative agreement between WisDOT and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources requires the two agencies work together to identify stormwater management controls during preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies. Similarly, during preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies, WisDOT should include other agencies which are impacted by stormwater runoff from freeway segments, like the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, in the identification of stormwater management controls for freeway segments. Any costs directly related to the control of stormwater from the freeway system should be funded with federal and state funds.

**Participation of Minority-Owned Businesses and Minority Workers**

During the reconstruction of the regional freeway system – and during engineering and environmental studies to be conducted prior to actual reconstruction – the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) should ensure the significant participation of disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) firms and the significant participation of minorities in the reconstruction labor force, particularly local minority businesses and local minority labor force. Significant participation could mean setting and achieving goals as set and achieved for projects such as Miller Park construction (25 percent DBE and 5 percent women business enterprise—WBE), to setting and achieving goals for minority business and minority labor force participation which would be equal to minority population composition—about 25 percent for the Southeastern Wisconsin Region.
For several decades, WisDOT has had plans, programs, and goals for DBE participation. However, with the reconstruction of the Marquette Interchange and subsequent reconstruction of the entire freeway system, WisDOT has recognized the significant increase in roadway construction, and the business and labor force opportunities which will occur in southeastern Wisconsin over the next 30 years. WisDOT established a Marquette Interchange DBE Advisory Committee which was charged with the task of considering how to achieve the significant participation of minorities in the reconstruction of the Marquette Interchange, and ultimately the reconstruction of the entire regional freeway system. Members of the DBE Advisory Committee and participants in DBE Advisory Committee meetings included representatives of the following:

- State legislature
- Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
- City of Milwaukee Common Council
- Minority-owned businesses
- Non-minority transportation consulting firms
- Employment and employment training agencies
- Labor unions
- Wisconsin Association of Consulting Engineers
- Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association
- National Association of Minority Contractors
- Private Industry Council of Milwaukee County
- WisDOT
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC)

WisDOT and the DBE Advisory Committee began their work by identifying the barriers to significant minority business and labor force participation, determining the barriers that need to be overcome, identifying actions to address and remove the barriers, considering how goals for increased participation should be established, and discussing how participation should be monitored and enforced.
Drawing on the work and recommendations of the DBE Advisory Committee for the Marquette Interchange, it is recommended that WisDOT accomplish the following with respect to establishing and achieving goals for minority participation:

- A DBE oversight committee should be formed with diverse representation – like the membership of the Marquette Interchange DBE Advisory Committee – for each freeway reconstruction project to assist WisDOT in overseeing the participation of minority businesses and labor force.

- Aggressive goals for the participation of minority businesses and labor force should be established by WisDOT for each freeway reconstruction project with the assistance of the DBE oversight committee.

- Overall goals for business and labor participation will need to be established for each freeway reconstruction project. The overall goals should include not only mandated elements, but also additional voluntary or discretionary goal elements for minority business and labor participation. The current mandated goal for minority labor participation in Milwaukee County is 8.0 percent. The current mandated goal for DBE participation statewide is 7.2 percent. The overall goals for freeway reconstruction projects that include voluntary or discretionary goals in addition to mandated goals could range from the goals set and achieved for Miller Park construction (25 percent DBE and 5 percent WBE) to goals reflecting minority population composition—about 25 percent for the Southeastern Wisconsin Region.

It is recommended that WisDOT encourage and employ unique methods of removing barriers to participation, encouraging the growth of the minority workforce, supporting the building of capacity of minority-owned firms, setting goals for participation, and monitoring and enforcing those goals. The implementation of the following recommended actions were considered by WisDOT and the DBE Advisory Committee to be essential to achieving significant minority business and labor participation:

- The number of existing minority and women-owned firms and capacity of those firms to perform the work needed should be determined. Also, the available minority and women labor force should be assessed.
• Firms and workers that may potentially participate in the reconstruction process should be educated regarding the magnitude of work needed and the capabilities that will be required to perform the work needed. Information should also be provided to other stakeholders such as schools and labor unions.

• WisDOT should partner with schools and community-based organizations to inform potential workers of the long-term opportunities and to develop training programs to assist those potential workers in gaining the skills required to take advantage of those opportunities.

• Majority-owned firms should participate in training and technical assistance programs targeted at developing the capacity of DBE firms to participate in freeway reconstruction projects.

• Mechanisms to provide information on available minority workers should be implemented and labor unions and contractors should be encouraged to collaborate to place minority workers.

• Mentoring programs should be established and apprenticeships should be encouraged and monitored.

• The achievement of minority participation should be monitored during each reconstruction project.

• The development of on-going, long-term business relationships—joint ventures, mentoring, and others—between majority and minority owned firms should be encouraged.

• Because the reconstruction of the regional freeway system will take place over a period of decades and through numerous contracts, WisDOT will have knowledge of how freeway reconstruction contractors have performed regarding minority participation. As the reconstruction of the freeway system proceeds, WisDOT should use past performance of contractors with respect to minority participation as a consideration when awarding future contracts.
Local Government Cost Share
All costs attendant to the freeway reconstruction should be funded entirely with federal and state funds. The only exceptions should be those mandated by the Wisconsin State Statutes and the Wisconsin Administrative Code as follows:

- Chapter 84 of the Wisconsin State Statutes requires local municipalities to pay 10 percent of any necessary municipal infrastructure relocation costs to accommodate roadway reconstruction, when municipal infrastructure is located in WisDOT right-of-way. With respect to freeway reconstruction, the municipal infrastructure affected may include infrastructure attached to local street bridges over the freeway system. When municipal infrastructure is located outside the existing WisDOT right-of-way, and roadway reconstruction would require infrastructure relocation, WisDOT is entirely responsible for the municipal infrastructure relocation costs.

- Chapter 84 of the Wisconsin State Statutes requires that the entire cost of necessary local road grade separations, relocations, alterations, and extensions be part of the freeway reconstruction and funded by WisDOT entirely with federal and state funds. However, should a county or local municipality request that a local road or bridge be rebuilt with additional width – for traffic lanes, medians or sidewalks – the additional cost attendant to the additional requested width is the responsibility of the county or local municipality.

- Chapters 66 and 84 of the Wisconsin State Statutes and TRANS 220 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code require public utilities to pay for relocation costs of public utility infrastructure to accommodate roadway improvements when the utility infrastructure is located in WisDOT right-of-way by permit. When utility infrastructure is located outside the existing WisDOT right-of-way, and freeway reconstruction would require utility infrastructure relocation, WisDOT is entirely responsible for the utility infrastructure relocation costs.

Freeway Law Enforcement Patrols
While the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has the primary responsibility to design, construct, maintain, and operate the freeway system, the Wisconsin State Patrol has primary responsibility for law enforcement on the freeway system statewide. Assistance is provided by county and local law enforcement agencies. The only exception is in Milwaukee County where, by State statute, the Milwaukee County Sheriff Department has primary responsibility for law enforcement on the freeway system within Milwaukee County.
WisDOT should work to fully fund Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Department freeway patrol and incident management activities with Federal and State funds. Currently, the cost of freeway patrol done by the Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Department is funded through four sources: 1) a portion of the costs incurred for patrolling the freeway system is recoverable under State general transportation aids ($2.0 million); 2) a portion of fines collected for violations is retained by the issuing agency ($2.7 million); 3) levy on the local property tax ($0.7 million); and 4) payment from the State to help defray the costs of operating the freeway patrol in return for assuming the primary responsibility for patrolling the county’s freeway system ($1.0 million).

In addition, during preliminary engineering, during freeway system reconstruction, and following reconstruction of the freeway system, the WisDOT should strengthen existing interagency cooperation with the Sheriff’s Departments throughout the Region. During freeway reconstruction, the WisDOT should provide the necessary additional federal and state funding for directed enforcement patrols in and near the construction zones as part of traffic mitigation:

- Involve the appropriate Sheriff’s Department(s) during preliminary engineering in the design of freeway traffic control measures including lane and ramp closures, and incident management strategies to be employed during each freeway reconstruction project.

- Fund all directed enforcement patrol and incident management activities attendant to the freeway reconstruction projects entirely with State and Federal funds during freeway reconstruction.

**POTENTIAL PROGRAM, SCHEDULE, AND FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE REGIONAL FREEWAY SYSTEM**

Map 7-1 presents a potential schedule, or program, for the reconstruction of the freeway system over the next several decades. The potential schedule is based upon the factors discussed below. It may be expected that the actual schedule for reconstruction followed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation will vary from this schedule for any number of reasons, including, for example, freeway segment pavements and bridges which last longer or fail earlier than expected, and delays which result from preliminary engineering and environmental impact studies, right-of-way acquisition, or final
Map 7-1

POTENTIAL SCHEDULE FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE REGIONAL FREEWAY SYSTEM

Source: SEWRPC.
engineering and design. The factors considered in preparing the potential freeway reconstruction time schedule are as follows:

- **The Remaining Useful Life Of Freeway System Pavements And Freeway Pavement Resurfacing History** – The potential time schedule attempts to provide for the reconstruction of freeway segments after the end of the expected service life of their second resurfacing. However, given the number of freeway segments which will require such reconstruction between the years 2010 to 2020, a third resurfacing may be expected to be necessary for some freeway segments. Reconstruction is proposed at, or before, the end of the useful life of all freeway bridges.

- **Maintaining a Level Amount of Annual Reconstruction Funding** – The potential schedule provides for relatively equal annual levels of reconstruction funding from the initiation of reconstruction through the year 2030. Again, because a number of freeway segments may be expected to require reconstruction between the years 2010 and 2020, some third resurfacings or maintenance of some freeway segments may be necessary.

- **Grouping Of Freeway Segments For Reconstruction Purposes** – Some freeway segments may be logical to be reconstructed concurrently. Reasons for such grouping may relate to the logical inclusion of a freeway system interchange with an adjacent mainline freeway segment and the inclusion of a complementary freeway stub or spur segment with a connecting mainline freeway segment.

- **Previously Completed Detailed Studies** – Following the completion of the Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study, additional studies will need to be initiated and completed for each segment of the regional freeway system prior to reconstruction. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has already completed the required preliminary engineering study for one freeway segment – IH 94 in Kenosha and Racine Counties. Much of the information presented in the freeway reconstruction study was derived directly from that previously completed study, such as cost estimates and right-of-way impacts. The completion of that more detailed study means that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation would have a “head start” on the reconstruction of that freeway segment compared to other freeway segments.
• **Traffic Operations during Reconstruction** – The reconstruction of each freeway segment will affect the motorists that normally travel on that freeway segment. Whenever possible, the reconstruction of freeway facilities that may be used as an alternate route while another freeway facility is under reconstruction—mainline segments and/or freeway-to-freeway system interchanges—should be avoided.

Regarding the funding needed for freeway system reconstruction, the reconstruction of the freeway system will be the responsibility of the State of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and the freeway system will be reconstructed entirely with Federal and State funds. The purpose of the freeway reconstruction study is to define what is needed for Milwaukee County and the Southeastern Wisconsin freeway system, but it will be up to the State Legislature and Governor, and WisDOT, to determine how, and on what schedule, to fund the reconstruction.

The funding needed for implementation of the final recommended freeway system reconstruction plan will be about $200 million per year. Portions of the funding required will come from the approximately $50 million annually spent now on freeway resurfacing and $50 million annually already set aside by the State Legislature. With respect to the remaining required funding, the State currently spends about $850 million annually on State highways. The Governor and Legislature have the responsibility to prioritize spending needs statewide, including the needs for the reconstruction of the regional freeway system. Moreover, comparison of the total costs of implementing the regional transportation plan—including its public transit and arterial street and highway elements, and the potential reconstruction of the freeway system within southeastern Wisconsin—to estimated revenues which may be expected to be available indicates only a modest gap of about 10 percent, or $50 million annually, between estimated total regional transportation plan costs of $550 million annually and estimated available annual revenues of $500 million annually.

**COMMISSION STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Commission staff provided recommendations with respect to the final recommended plan to the Advisory Committee for its consideration at its final meeting on April 2, 2003. The Commission staff’s recommendations were based on the following premises:
1. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has jurisdictional authority over all freeways in the seven-county Southeastern Wisconsin Region. All decisions relative to the reconstruction and/or capacity expansion of existing freeways will be made by the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, subject to the oversight of the Wisconsin Legislature and the Governor.

2. The Regional Freeway Reconstruction Study was requested by the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation with full knowledge that the State of Wisconsin is about to embark upon an anticipated three-decade long process of reconstructing the 270 mile regional freeway system in Southeastern Wisconsin and for the express purpose of identifying a “regional consensus” on the desirable scope of a freeway system reconstruction plan and program. In the discussions with the WisDOT Secretary attendant to the initiation of the study, and as documented in the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) staff memorandum entitled “Scope of Work: A Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study for Southeastern Wisconsin,” it was intended that the regional consensus be based upon widespread agreement on the plan and program and, in particular, endorsement of the plan and program by the seven county boards of supervisors in the Region. The plan review process was, accordingly, explicitly structured to identify the extent to which each of the seven county boards of supervisors could come to agreement on a particular plan and program.

3. The Commission staff and Advisory Committee put forth a preliminary system plan recommendation that had the following key recommendations:

   a. Rebuilding the entire regional freeway system to modern design standards and, in so doing, thereby addressing the design and design-related safety deficiencies of the existing system. This rebuilding process would involve reconfiguration of freeway-to-freeway system interchanges, improvement of freeway system service interchanges, and improvement of freeway mainline sections.

   b. Providing additional lanes on 127 miles of the regional freeway system, in most cases providing two additional lanes in the capacity expansion process.
4. The Advisory Committee’s preliminary plan recommendations of the Commission staff and Advisory Committee were subjected to a widespread, rigorous, and lengthy public involvement and participation process. That process included public informational meetings and public hearings, outreach and briefings to groups, a public opinion survey, formal consideration of the preliminary recommendations by local municipalities, and—most importantly given the consensus-seeking process selected for the study—formal consideration of the preliminary plan recommendations by the seven county boards of supervisors in the Region.

5. With respect to six of the seven counties in the Region—Kenosha, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha—the county boards of supervisors fully endorsed the preliminary system plan recommendations put forth by the Advisory Committee. In those cases where counties have county executives—Kenosha, Racine, and Waukesha—the county executives supported the actions taken by their county boards of supervisors.

6. With respect to Milwaukee County, no official position on the preliminary plan recommendations was forthcoming since the legislative and executive branches of county government could not reach agreement. The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors supported those aspects of the preliminary plan recommendation dealing with the reconstruction of the freeway system to modern design standards and with providing additional freeway lane capacity on 108 of the 127 miles of freeway proposed for such capacity expansion. The County Executive vetoed the County Board’s resolution and the County Board did not override that veto. In his veto message, the County Executive supported the entire preliminary plan recommendation put forth by the Advisory Committee while calling upon the WisDOT design engineers to make every effort to minimize impacts upon abutting neighborhoods in those cases where freeway capacity expansion is being proposed. While no formal position of Milwaukee County on this matter is available, the actions of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors and the Milwaukee County Executive may be interpreted to indicate agreement on the preliminary plan recommendations in all respects save one: the proposed capacity additions attendant to the 19 miles of freeway that extend along IH 43 from the Mitchell Interchange to Silver Spring Drive, and along IH 94 from the Marquette Interchange to the Zoo Interchange.

Given the findings and conclusions of the consensus-seeking process outlined earlier, the Commission staff recommended the following to the Advisory Committee with respect to the final recommended plan:
1. The actions taken by the duly elected legislative and executive officials in the seven counties of Southeastern Wisconsin evidence widespread agreement on the great majority of the substantive proposals for freeway reconstruction included in the preliminary system plan put forth by the Advisory Committee.

2. The adopted regional transportation system plan for Southeastern Wisconsin should be amended to include the following with respect to the 270-mile regional freeway system:

   a. Rebuild the entire freeway system to modern design standards on a segment-by-segment basis as those freeways wear out and need to be reconstructed. This includes the following types of design and design-related safety improvements:

   - Reconfigure Freeway-to-Freeway System Interchanges
     - Relocate left hand on- and off-ramps to right hand side of freeway
     - Minimize lane drops and provide route continuity
     - Improve freeway-to-freeway ramps to provide ramp speeds that are closer to freeway mainline speeds
     - Address closely spaced service interchanges with grade-separated or collector-distributor roadways

   - Improve Freeway System Service Interchanges
     - Lengthen and widen ramp tapers
     - Convert multi-point exits to single point exits
     - Separate ramps from frontage roads in Kenosha and Racine Counties
     - Provide selected auxiliary lanes to address closely spaces interchanges

   - Improve Freeway Mainline
     - Improve freeway horizontal and vertical curvature, grades, and vertical clearance to meet standards
     - Provide full inside and outside shoulders
b. Provide additional lane capacity on the following segments of the regional freeway system as those segments are rebuilt over time, such segments totaling 108 miles of freeway (see Map 7-2):

- IH 94 in Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee Counties from the Wisconsin-Illinois State line to the Mitchell Interchange (from the present six to eight lanes)
- IH 94 in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties from the Zoo Interchange to STH 16 (from the present six to eight lanes)
- IH 94 in Waukesha County from CTH SS to STH 67 (from the present four to six lanes)
- IH 894 in Milwaukee County from the Mitchell Interchange to the Zoo Interchange (from the present six to eight lanes)
- USH 45 in Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Washington Counties from the Zoo Interchange to the Richfield Interchange where USH 41 and USH 45 divide in Washington County (from the present six to eight lanes)
- IH 43 in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties from Racine Avenue to the Hale Interchange (from the present four to six lanes)
- IH 43 in Milwaukee and Ozaukee Counties from Silver Spring Drive to the Saukville Interchange where STH 57 and IH 43 divide in Ozaukee County (from the present four to six lanes)

3. That as the WisDOT undertakes freeway system reconstruction projects over the next several decades, the Department should give careful and favorable consideration to the ancillary recommendations set forth earlier in this chapter attendant to the conduct of preliminary engineering and environmental studies, noise barriers, stormwater management, the participation of minority-owned business and the minority labor force in the reconstruction program, local government cost-share, and freeway system law enforcement patrols in Milwaukee County.

4. In recognition of the clear difference of opinion evidenced by the actions of the legislative and executive branches of Milwaukee County government, the unresolved freeway capacity issues should be revisited at an appropriate time prior to reconstruction in an attempt to reconcile the need for additional capacity in Milwaukee County with the need to maintain sensitivity to neighborhood concerns.
FREEWAY PROPOSED TO BE WIDENED FROM 6 TO 8 LANES

FREEWAY PROPOSED TO BE WIDENED FROM 4 TO 6 LANES

OTHER FREEWAY SEGMENTS

Source: SEWRPC.
ACTION BY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee met on April 2, 2003, for a final time. After careful debate and consideration, including consideration of the foregoing Commission staff recommendations, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Freeway System Advisory Committee made the following recommendations to its creating body, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, on a vote of 15 members in favor, 8 opposed, 1 abstention, and one member absent:

1. The actions taken by the duly elected legislative and executive officials in the seven counties of Southeastern Wisconsin evidence widespread agreement on the great majority of the substantive proposals for freeway reconstruction included in the preliminary system plan put forth by the Advisory Committee.

2. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Commission amend the adopted regional transportation system plan for Southeastern Wisconsin to include the following with respect to the 270-mile regional freeway system:

   a. Rebuild the entire freeway system to modern design standards on a segment-by-segment basis as those freeways wear out and need to be reconstructed. This includes the following types of design and design-related safety improvements:

   • Reconfigure Freeway-to-Freeway System Interchanges
     • Relocate left hand on- and off-ramps to right hand side of freeway
     • Minimize lane drops and provide route continuity
     • Improve freeway-to-freeway ramps to provide ramp speeds that are closer to freeway mainline speeds
     • Address closely spaced service interchanges with grade-separated or collector-distributor roadways

   • Improve Freeway System Service Interchanges
     • Lengthen and widen ramp tapers
• Convert multi-point exits to single point exits
• Separate ramps from frontage roads in Kenosha and Racine Counties
• Provide selected auxiliary lanes to address closely spaced interchanges

• Improve Freeway Mainline
  • Improve freeway horizontal and vertical curvature, grades, and vertical clearance to meet standards
  • Provide full inside and outside shoulders

b. Provide additional lane capacity on the following segments of the regional freeway system as those segments are rebuilt over time, such segments totaling 127 miles of freeway (see Map 7-3):

• IH 94 in Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee Counties from the Wisconsin-Illinois State line to the Mitchell Interchange (from the present six to eight lanes)
• IH 43 in Milwaukee County from the Mitchell Interchange to Silver Spring Drive (from the present six to eight lanes)
• IH 94 in Milwaukee County from the Marquette Interchange to the Zoo Interchange (from the present six to eight lanes)
• IH 94 in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties from the Zoo Interchange to STH 16 (from the present six to eight lanes)
• IH 94 in Waukesha County from CTH SS to STH 67 (from the present four to six lanes)
• IH 894 in Milwaukee County from the Mitchell Interchange to the Zoo Interchange (from the present six to eight lanes)
• USH 45 in Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Washington Counties from the Zoo Interchange to the Richfield Interchange where USH 41 and USH 45 divide in Washington County (from the present six to eight lanes)
• IH 43 in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties from Racine Avenue to the Hale Interchange (from the present four to six lanes)
Map 7-3

FREeway SEGMENTS PROPOSED TO BE WIDENED WITH ADDITIONAL LANES
UPON RECONSTRUCTION UNDER FINAL RECOMMENDED PLAN

- **Red** - Freeway proposed to be widened from 6 to 8 lanes
- **Orange** - Freeway proposed to be widened from 4 to 6 lanes
- **Gray** - Other freeway segments

Source: SEWRPC.
• IH 43 in Milwaukee and Ozaukee Counties from Silver Spring Drive to the Saukville Interchange where STH 57 and IH 43 divide in Ozaukee County (from the present four to six lanes)²

3. That as the WisDOT undertakes freeway system reconstruction projects over the next several decades, the Commission recommend to the Department that it give careful and favorable consideration to the ancillary recommendations set forth earlier in this chapter attendant to the conduct of preliminary engineering and environmental studies, noise barriers, stormwater management, the participation of minority-owned business and the minority labor force in the reconstruction program, local government cost-share, and freeway system law enforcement patrols in Milwaukee County. In addition, the WisDOT is requested to maintain sensitivity to the neighborhoods surrounding the freeway system as part of the design to expand the capacity of the system.

4. When the WisDOT prepares for the reconstruction of the freeway system on a segment-by-segment basis through preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies, it is recommended that the WisDOT also develop financing plans. The financing plans should identify the expected funding requirements and the expected funding sources for each freeway reconstruction project, with such plans to be submitted to the Governor and State Legislature for their consideration along with other required project documentation including preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment studies.

* * *

²Appendix D compares the final recommended plan to the preliminary plan in terms of estimated construction cost, right-of-way acquisition, and forecast freeway system traffic congestion.